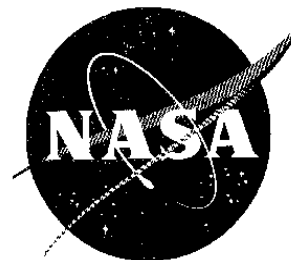


NewsRelease



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APRIL 14 PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

Biggest bearing in U.S. to be hoisted into new home

It sounds like a child's riddle. What's circular, 15 and a half feet wide and four inches thick? No, it's not a big silver hula hoop, but a giant steel bearing, the largest of its type ever manufactured in the U.S.

That bearing is headed to a wind tunnel at the NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va. **Crews will uncrate it and install it inside a giant assembly at 8 a.m. Wednesday, April 14, at MICRO CRAFT, Inc., a company just outside Langley's front gate.** Workers will use an indoor crane to gently hoist the huge ring and place it in its new home.

The bearing was manufactured by Messinger Bearings Company in Philadelphia, Pa. It weighs 1,000 pounds, contains 914 metal balls and cost \$100,000. The giant ring made news back in late February when it was shipped by truck. Its crate was so large it took up two lanes of Interstate 95.

A Messinger spokesman says it took about eight months to make the bearing, which is part of a model cart for Langley's 14-by 22-Foot Subsonic Wind Tunnel. The cart is used to place aircraft models in different positions in the wind tunnel, so air can flow over them. That flow provides researchers with information about how aircraft would react in flight. The bearing is going into a platform that will be able to rotate 360 degrees and place a model into a variety of angles. Once it's moved to Langley this summer the new cart will allow for more accuracy and provide better test data.

If you're interested in taking pictures of the giant bearing being moved, please go to MICRO CRAFT at 3130 N. Armistead Ave. at 8 a.m. tomorrow. Turn right onto Nasa Dr. from Armistead Ave., just before entering the NASA Langley front gate, and go to the back door closest to Nasa Dr.

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